

ELECTRONIC DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an electronic data management system and the like,
5 suitable for managing electronic data such as electronic account data which require secure management.

Description of the Related Art

Any country has a law which decrees that business account documents regarding to
dealings should be kept for a predetermined period. In Japan, a law which accepts
10 electronic data files representing business accounts, have been effective since January
1999. Such the business account data require more secure management as compared to
other ordinary electronic data files, because they must be protected from serious crimes
such as tax evasion and misappropriation of public fund.

Verification by password has been a major way to certify a data administrator,
15 however, it is not perfect protection because one who steals password can access the data
easily. The business account data have required another new protection technique
having improved security.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide secure data management of
20 electronic data such as an electronic account file.

To accomplish the above object, an electronic data management system according to
a first aspect of the present invention is an electronic data management system which
comprises a controller for executing a program stored in a memory while being connected
to an input device for data input, storage units, and a data reader for reading data stored in
25 a first recording medium, wherein

the storage units comprise a first storage unit which stores an electronic data record
file including electronic data, and a second storage unit which stores a log file including

In the above system, the controller may encrypt the log of the electronic data input by the input device with the predetermined encryption key, and store the encrypted data in the log file.

In this case, the controller decodes the encrypted log of the input electronic data
5 stored in the log file with using a predetermined decode key when the controller certifies the first recording medium and the operator, and

the system further comprises an output device which outputs the log of the input electronic data decoded by the controller.

The input device may input the update data in accordance with the log of the input
10 electronic data output by the output device.

In the above system, the input device may also input verification information representing an operator who inputs the electronic data or the update data. In this case, the controller associates the verification information input by the input device with the input or updated electronic data before storing the electronic data in the electronic data
15 record file.

In the above system, the storage units may further comprise a third storage unit which stores a physical characteristic data file including data representing physical characteristics of the certified operator. In this case, the system further comprises a data input device which inputs data representing the operator's physical characteristics, and a
20 user verification unit which compares the physical characteristic data input by the data input device with the physical characteristic data stored in the physical characteristic data file, and determines whether the operator is the certified operator or not based on the comparison results.

In this case, the first recording medium may further store data relating to the
25 physical characteristics of the certified operator, and

the user verification unit compares the physical characteristic data input by the data input device with the physical characteristic data stored in the first recording medium, and

determines whether the operator is the certified operator or not based on the comparison results.

The controller may act as the user verification unit by executing a program stored in the memory.

- 5 In the above system, the controller may store the electronic data stored by the input device in the electronic data record file immediately after the data input.

In the above system, the controller may store the electronic data in the electronic data record file based on the log of the electronic data stored in the log file when the controller certifies the first recording medium and the operator.

- 10 The above system according to the first aspect may further comprise a second data reader which reads data stored in a detachable second recording medium. In this case, the controller allows the input device to input the electronic data when the controller certifies the second recording medium based on the data read by the second data reader.

- 15 In the above system, the electronic data record file stores, for example, electronic account data. In this case, the electronic data and the update data may include information regarding to dealings and information for updating the dealing information to be recorded on the electronic account.

To accomplish the above object, an electronic data management system according to a second aspect comprises:

- 20 data input means for inputting electronic data;

electronic data recording means for recording information input by the data input means;

medium verification means for verifying a detachable recording medium when the recording medium is applied to the medium verification means;

- 25 user verification means for determining whether an operator is a certified one or not;

access authorization means for authorizing input of update data for updating the electronic data recorded on the electronic data recording means, when the medium

verification means verifies the recording medium and the user verification means verifies the operator;

update data input means for inputting the update data when the access authorization means authorizes input of the update data;

- 5 data update means for updating the electronic data stored in the electronic data recording means in accordance with the update data input by the update data input means; and

log management means for recording log of the electronic data input by the data input means and log of the update data input by the update data input means.

- 10 The above system may further comprise electronic data output means for outputting the log of the electronic data recorded on the log management means when the access authorization means authorizes the update data input.

In this case, the update data input means may input the update data in accordance with the electronic data output by the electronic data output means.

- 15 In the above system, the data input means may also input verification information representing who inputs the electronic data, and

the update data input means may also input verification information representing who inputs the update data. In this case, the electronic data recording means associates the verification information representing who inputs the electronic data or the update data with the input electronic data or updated electronic data before recording the electronic data.

- 20 To accomplish the above object, a method according to a third aspect of the present invention is a method of managing electronic data which is applicable to a system comprising an electronic data record file for recording electronic data, and a log file for recording log of input or update of the electronic data to be recorded on the electronic data record file, the method comprises:

inputting the electronic data to be recorded on the electronic data record file;

storing log of the input electronic data in the log file;

recording the input electronic data on the electronic data record file;

discriminating whether a detachable recording medium is certified one or not when the recording medium is applied to the system;

5 discriminating whether a certified operator operates the system or not;

permitting input of update data for updating the electronic data recorded on the electronic data record file when the recording medium and the operator are certified;

inputting the update data after the permission;

updating the electronic data in the electronic data record file in accordance with the

10 input update data; and

storing log of the input update data in the log file.

In the above method, the permitting the update data input may output the log of the input electronic data stored in the log file. In this case, the update data are input in accordance with the output electronic data.

15 In the above method, log of the input electronic data and the update data may be encrypted when storing the log of the input electronic data or the log of the input update data in the log file.

In this case, the log of the input electronic stored in the log file may be decoded when the recording medium and the operator are certified, to output the log data.

20 In the above method, the inputting the electronic data may also inputs verification information representing who input the electronic data, and

the inputting the update data may also inputs verification information representing who inputs the update data.

In this case, the recording the electronic data on the electronic data record file
25 associates the verification information representing who inputs the electronic data with the electronic data before recording the electronic data on the electronic data record file, and

the recording the update data on the electronic data file associates the verification information representing who inputs the update data before recording the update data on the electronic data record file.

In the above method, the discriminating the certified operator may compare data
 5 representing physical characteristics of an operator with previously stored data representing physical characteristics of the certified operator.

In the above method, the recording the electronic data on the electronic data record file may record the electronic data immediately after the inputting the electronic data inputs the electronic data.

10 The recording the electronic data may record the electronic data on the electronic data record file when the discriminations certify the recording medium and the operator.

To accomplish the above object, a computer readable recording medium according to a third aspect of the present invention is a computer readable recording medium storing a program which causes a computer system comprising an electronic data record file for
 15 recording electronic data and a log file for storing log of input or updated electronic data to be recorded on the electronic data record file, the program comprises the steps of:

inputting the electronic data to be recorded on the electronic data record file;
 storing log of the input electronic data in the log file;
 recording the input electronic data on the electronic data record file;
 20 discriminating whether a detachable recording medium is certified one or not when the recording medium is applied to the system;
 discriminating whether a certified operator operates the system or not;
 permitting input of update data for updating the electronic data recorded on the electronic data record file when the recording medium and the operator are certified;
 25 inputting the update data after the permission;
 updating the electronic data in the electronic data record file in accordance with the input update data; and

storing log of the input update data in the log file.

By the program stored in the above recording medium, the electronic data input step may also input verification information representing who inputs the electronic data;

the update data input step may also input verification information representing who
5 inputs the update data;

the electronic data recording step may associate the electronic data with the verification information representing who inputs the electronic data before recording the electronic data on the electronic data record file; and

the update data recording step may associate the update data with the verification
10 information representing who inputs the update data before recording the update data on the electronic data record file.

To accomplish the above object, a program data signal according to a fourth aspect of the present invention is a program data signal being embedded in a carrier wave, which represents a program for causing a computer system comprising an electronic data record
15 file for recording electronic data and a log file for recording input or update log of the electronic data to be recorded on the electronic data record file, the program data signal comprises:

- a segment for inputting the electronic data to be recorded on the electronic data record file;
- 20 a segment for recording log of the input electronic data on the log file;
- a segment for recording the input electronic data on the electronic data record file;
- a segment for discriminating whether a detachable recording medium is certified one or not when the recording medium is applied to the computer system;
- a segment for discriminating whether an operator is a certified operator or not;
- 25 a segment for permitting input of update data for updating the electronic data recorded on the electronic data record file when the recording medium and the operator are certified;

a segment for inputting the update data when the update data input is permitted;

a segment for updating the electronic data recorded on the electronic data record file in accordance with the input update data; and

a segment for storing log of the input update data in the log file.

5 In the program data signal, the electronic data input segment may also input verification information representing who inputs the electronic data,

the update data input segment may also input verification information representing who inputs the update data,

10 the electronic data recording segment may associate the verification information representing who inputs the electronic data with the electronic data before recording the electronic data on the electronic data record file, and

the update data recording segment may associate the verification information representing who inputs the update data before recording the update data on the electronic data record file.

15 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These objects and other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent upon reading of the following detailed description and the accompanying drawings in which:

20 FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the structure of an electronic account management system according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a diagram showing data recorded on an electronic account file shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a diagram showing data recorded on a log file shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a flowchart showing a process flow when a user inputs dealing data;

25 FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing a process flow when an administrator updates the dealing data;

FIG. 6 is a flowchart showing a process flow when data recording on the electronic

account file is done by the administrator solely; and

FIGS. 7A and 7B are block diagrams schematically showing updated electronic account management systems according to modified embodiments of the present invention.

5 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

A preferred embodiment of the present invention will now be described with reference to accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram showing the structure of an electronic account file management system according to the embodiment. As shown in FIG. 1, the system
10 comprises an electronic account file manager 1 to which an input device 18 and an output device 19 are connected, and a magnetic card 2 and an IC (Integrated Circuit) card 4 which are detachable to the electronic account file manager 1. The system obtains data representing finger print 3 as the administrator's physical characteristics (described later in detail).

15 The magnetic card 2 is owned by a user who utilizes the system, that is, who operates the system to record his/her dealing data. More precisely, the user inserts the magnetic card 2 into a card reader 11 and inputs his/her dealing data through the input device 18. The IC card 4 is owned by the system administrator. The administrator inserts the IC card 4 into a reader/writer 14 and inputs command through the input device
20 18 to update and/or delete the dealing data. The IC card 4 previously stores data representing the administrator's finger print and predetermined cryptograph keys.

The electronic account file manager 1 is a special purpose computer or a customized general purpose computer. The electronic account file manager 1 comprises a controller
25 10 including a CPU (Central Processing Unit) 10a, an internal memory 10b and a timer 10c, a magnetic card reader 11, a finger print recognizer 12, an IC card reader/writer 14, a SAM (Secure Application Module) 15, fixed disks 20 storing a finger print file 13 and a log file 17, and a detachable recording medium 21 storing an electronic account file 16.

In the controller 10, the CPU 10a executes a program (described later) stored in the internal memory 10b to control the magnetic card reader 11, the finger print recognizer 12, the IC card reader/writer 14 and the SAM 15, and/or updates the contents of the electronic account file 16 and the log file 17. The controller 10 outputs to the output device 19 any
 5 result at any appropriate timing. The controller 10 records log on the log file 17 in accordance with time information counted by the timer 10c.

The magnetic card reader 11 reads data recorded on the magnetic card 2 inserted. When the reader 11 certifies the owner of the inserted card 2, the reader 11 informs the controller 10 of it.

10 The finger print recognizer 12 comprises a scanner 12a which scans the finger print 3, and performs pattern matching among the data representing the scanned finger print 3, finger print data stored in the finger print file 13, and finger print data read from the IC card 4. In a case where the data representing the scanned finger print 3 coincide with the finger print data in the finger print file 13 and the IC card 4, the finger print recognizer 12
 15 verifies that the scanned finger print 3 is the administrator's finger print, and informs the controller 10 of it.

The finger print file 13 is prepared in the fixed disk 20 in the electronic account file manager 1. The finger print file 13 previously stores finger print(s) 3 of the administrator(s) of the electronic account file manager 1. In this case, the finger print(s)
 20 are scanned by the scanner 12a of the finger print recognizer 12. In order to prevent the data in the finger print file 13 from being falsified, the electronic account file manager 1 may employ a protection system which allows the administrator to access the finger print file 13 only when the IC card 4 inserted in the IC card reader/writer 14 is certified.

The IC card reader/writer 14 reads data on the IC card 4 inserted. The IC card
 25 reader/writer 14 collaborate with the SAM 15 to perform verification procedure (described later). When the verification is successful, the IC card reader/writer 14 informs the controller 10 of it. The IC card reader/writer 14 is also applicable to writing

finger print data and cryptograph keys on the IC card 4.

The SAM 15 is, for example, a single chip semiconductor device. The SAM 15 stores cryptograph keys (private key and public key). The SAM 15 collaborates with the IC card reader/writer 14 to perform verification by challenge-response technique utilizing the cryptograph keys in the SAM 15 and the IC card 4 when the IC card 4 is inserted in the IC card reader/writer 14.

The electronic account file 16 is prepared on a detachable rewritable storage medium 21 such as MO, CD-R, and DVD. As shown in FIG. 2, the electronic account file 16 stores data sets regarding to dealings and associated user's name who input the data set. In the electronic account file 16, electronic signature (ESIG) represents the user's names. Data recording on the electronic account file 16 may be done at every dealings, or may be batched in accordance with the log data in the log file 17.

The log file 17 is prepared in the fixed disk 20 in the electronic account file manager 1. The log file 17 stores log data relating to dealings and data update (hereinafter data update includes data deleting). FIG. 3 shows records in the log file 17, that is, "date", "time", "user's name", "dealings", "amount", "termination" flag, "update" flag, and "updated items".

The log file 17 stores the log data record by record each time the user inputs dealing data and the administrator updates the data. The log data are encrypted by the public key in the SAM 15. Only the administrator is allowed to decode the log data by using the private key in the SAM 15.

The input device 18 may be a keyboard or the like operated by the user and the administrator to input dealing data and any commands. The output device 19 may be a display or the like which displays requested results output by the controller 10, for example, it displays decoded log data in the log file 17 when the administrator updates the electronic account file 16.

How the electronic account managing system manages the electronic account file 16

will now be described. As conditions for the following explanation, dealing data will be recorded on the electronic account file 16 each time the dealing is done, and data representing the administrator's finger print 3 has been previously stored in the finger print file 13 and the IC card 4 owned by the administrator before using the system.

5 FIG. 4 is a flowchart showing steps for inputting dealing data by the user. The process flow starts after the magnetic card reader 11 informs the controller 10 that the magnetic card 2 inserted to the reader 11 and its user are verified.

10 The user operates the input device to input dealing data and his/her electronic signature (ESIG) (step S11). The controller 10 affixes date and time obtained by the timer 10c and user's name to the input dealing data, thus, 1 record of log data is prepared. Then the controller 10 fetches the public key from the SAM 15 to encrypt the prepared 1 record data, and stores it on the log file 17 (step S12).

15 The controller 10 associates the input dealing data with the user's electronic signature and stores them on the electronic account file 16 (step S13). Then, the process flow is terminated.

FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing steps for updating the dealing data by the administrator. This process flow starts after the administrator inserts his/her IC card 4 to the IC card reader/writer 14.

20 The IC card reader/writer 14 collaborates with the SAM 15 to perform certification by challenge-response technique with using the cryptograph keys in the inserted IC card 4 and the SAM 15 to certify the IC card 4 (step S21). The controller 10 determines whether the certification is successful or not based on information from the IC card reader/writer 14 representing the certification results (step S22).

25 If the certification successful, the controller 10 controls the finger print recognizer 12 to perform finger print comparison. That is, the finger print recognizer 12 drives the scanner 12a to scan the finger print 3. The finger print recognizer 12 compares finger print data representing scanned finger print 3, finger print data in the IC card 4 read by the

IC card reader/writer 14, and finger print data stored in the finger print file 13 by pattern matching technique. The finger print recognizer 12 compares pattern data of the three finger print data sets (step S23). Then, the controller 10 discriminates whether the compared three finger print data sets coincide with each other or not based on information
5 from the finger print recognizer 12 representing the comparison results (step S24).

If the three finger print data sets coincide with each other, the controller 10 fetches the private key from the SAM 15 to decode the log data in the log file 17. The controller 10 controls the output device 19 to display the decoded log data (step S25). Once the log data are displayed on the output device 19, the administrator is allowed to update the
10 log data. Then, the administrator operates the input device 18 to update the log data and input the administrator's electronic signature (step S26).

The controller 10 affixes date and time obtained by the timer 10c and user's name to the updated data, thus, 1 record of log data is prepared. Then, the controller 10 fetches the public key from the SAM 15 to encrypt the updated 1 record of data, and stores it in
15 the log file 17 (step S27).

The controller 10 updates the data in the electronic account file 16 in accordance with the data updated at step S26, and associates the electronic signature input at step S26 with the updated account data (step S28). And, the process flow is terminated.

If the certification was unsuccessful at step S22, or if the finger print data sets did
20 not coincide with each other at step S24, the controller 10 terminates the process flow immediately.

The system according to the embodiment features the following four ways to realize the secure data management.

(1) Unless the administrator passes both medium verification and user verification,
25 the administrator can not update the data in the electronic account file 16. That is, the system requires verification with the IC card 4 and verification with finger print 3. Such the dual verification realizes more effective data protection as compared to the

conventional verification by password, because it is very difficult for persons other than the administrator to alter the data in the electronic account file 16.

(2) The administrator verification with the scanned finger print 3 further requires dual verification, that is, pattern matching with the finger print data in the finger print file 13 and with the finger print data in IC card 4. This structure prevents the electronic account file 16 from being illegally altered in a case where the finger print file in the finger print file 13 are falsified, or where the IC card 4 is illegally copied.

(3) Electronic signatures are affixed to the records in the electronic account file 16 for clarifying who inputs and updates the record. This structure reveals illegal data alteration by uncertified person.

(4) The log data in the log file 17 are encrypted by the public key in SAM 15. The administrator is allowed to decode the log data only when the administrator passes both medium verification and administrator verification. Therefore, only the administrator is allowed to read and update the log data in the log file 17.

Accordingly, the system according to this embodiment realizes secure data management because unregistered person hardly access the electronic account file 16 to alter the data. Moreover, it is very difficult for unregistered persons to read the log file 17. This feature also improves secure data management for the electronic account file 16.

In the above embodiment, the finger print 3 has been employed as physical characteristic for certifying the administrator. The present invention may employ various other physical characteristics for the administrator verification such as the iris, hand shape, facial characteristics, vocal characteristics, and the retina. The password verification may be employed in addition to or instead of the verification with the physical characteristics.

The controller 10 may perform the finger print pattern matching by executing a program prepared in the internal memory 10b. In this case, the scanner 12a and the

finger print file 13 may be external (peripheral) devices detachably connected to the controller 10.

The IC card 4 may store the keys for encrypting and decoding the log data in the log file 17, instead of the SAM 15.

5 In the above embodiment, the input data are recorded on the electronic account file 16 immediately. Instead of this structure, only the administrator may be allowed to record the input data on the electronic account file 16. In this case, the process flow shown in FIG. 4 is terminated at step S12 (step S13 is unnecessary).

FIG. 6 is an additional flowchart shoring a process flow in a case where the system
10 employs the above described structure. In this case, the process flow starts after the administrator inserts the IC card 4 to the IC card reader/writer 14.

After execution of steps S21 to S24 shown in FIG. 5 (step S31), the administrator operates the input device 18 to select options, dealing data update or data recording (step S32). The controller 10 determines which option was selected (step S33).

15 If the data update was selected, steps S25 to S28 shown in FIG. 5 are executed (step S34). And, the process flow is terminated. On the contrary, if the data recording was selected, the controller 10 fetches the private key from the SAM 15 to decode the log data in the log file 17. Of the decoded records, the controller selects records representing dealing data (or updated data) which have not been recorded on the electronic account file
20 16, and records them with associating the administrator's electronic signature therewith on the electronic account file 16. And, the process flow is terminated.

According to this structure in accordance with the process flow shown in FIG. 6, the data recording on the electronic account file 16 is done by the administrator. Therefore, this updated embodiment realizes more secure data management as compared to the
25 above described original embodiment.

The present invention may be applicable not only to managing the electronic account file 16 and the log file 17 featured in the above embodiments, but also to various

electronic data managements. The present invention is effective in managing data which should be strongly protected from data stealing or falsification as well as the electronic account data.

In the above embodiments, the CPU 10a executes the program stored in the internal
5 memory 10b to execute the process flow shown in FIGS. 4, 5, and 6. The program may be stored in a computer readable recording medium.

FIGS. 7A and 7B exemplifies cases of the separate program structure. FIG. 7A exemplifies a case where the program is stored in MO (Magneto-optical disk) 51. In this case, an MO drive 50 reads the program from the MO 51 and transfers it to the internal
10 memory 10b in the controller 10. FIG. 7B exemplifies another case where the program is stored in a remote server 62. In this case, the system comprises a communication unit 60 which is connected to a network 61 to communicate with the server 62. The communication unit 60 request the server 62 via the network 61 to send a program data signal in which the program is embeded in a carrier wave signal. The communication
15 unit 61 receives the program signal and transfers it to the internal memory 10b in the controller 10. FIGS. 7A and 7B do not show detailed illustration of the electronic account file manager 1, but it has the same structure as described in the above embodiments.

Various embodiments and changes may be made thereunto without departing from
20 the broad spirit and scope of the invention. The above-described embodiments are intended to illustrate the present invention, not to limit the scope of the present invention. The scope of the present invention is shown by the attached claims rather than the embodiments. Various modifications made within the meaning of an equivalent of the claims of the invention and within the claims are to be regarded to be in the scope of the
25 present invention.

This application is based on Japanese Patent Application No. H11-164179 filed on June 10, 1999 and including specification, claims, drawings and summary. The

disclosure of the above Japanese Patent Application is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

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